

# Islam Women and Polygamy (Polygyny)

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## I. Introduction

The word 'Muslim women' makes us think of Muslim women wearing veils, polygamy, and women circumcision still being practiced in African regions.<sup>1</sup> Such characteristics are based on the teachings of Quran, and when the Quran view of womanhood is closely examined, the fundamental intension of veil culture, polygamy, and female circumcision will be understood. They propagate that "Islam protects and distinguishes women, not discriminate them." and Quran mentions the veil and polygamy for the "women protection" purposes.<sup>2</sup> Along with this, Hadith - the narrations concerning the words and deeds of Muhammad - and Sharia - the sacred law of Islam - are serving the role of guidebooks to adapt the viewpoint of Quran to everyday life more concretely.

Moreover, as for women circumcision, contrary to the fact that in most cases women circumcision is being practiced in Muslim region, Islam scholars deny that it is a Islamic tradition since the Islamic law does not regulate it. In fact, there is not a single line advocating women circumcision in Quran, and a controversy was aroused whether women circumcision is an Islamic tradition or not in Egypt. Contrary to how the Mufti sect asserted that women circumcision may not be a religious duty but is legal in May 1997, the religious sect leader of Al-Azhar clarified that Islam does not advocate women circumcision.<sup>3</sup>

Women circumcision which is considered to be a savage and uncivilized tradition which was a famous ritual practiced in Egypt, Arabia, and near the Red Sea in the Era of 'Jahiliyya'<sup>4</sup> before Islam.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Female circumcision ritual is still under practice in 38 out of 54 African Union. It is investigated that over 85% of Sudan, 60% of Egypt, 99% of Somalia, 98% of Ethiopia, 98% of Djibouti, and 60% of Nigeria received female circumcision. Sanghyeon Seo, *Female circumcision and Early Marriage are Violations of Women's Rights*. <http://blog.empas.com/kcw0707/9908394>, August 7, 2005. The common factor among these countries is they are Islam countries and mostly the Sunni.

<sup>2</sup> In Korea, a program that 'Islam protects and distinguishes women, not discriminate them' was publicly broadcasted through MBC 4 Parts Special 'Islam' - Part 2 'Muslim Woman.' An interview of Professor Heesu Lee from Hanyang University in Part 2 'Muslim Woman' of MBC 4 Parts Special 'Islam' broadcasted on September 14, 2001.

<sup>3</sup> Abstract of the book by S. R. Erlander, *The Cause of AIDS*, England, 1993-the abstract was obtained from the Institute for Research and Studies, Ministry of Health, Yemen, April 1994, quoted in Haifaa A. Jawad, *The right of Women in Islam: An Authentic Approach* (London: Macmillan Press LTD, 1998), 56.

<sup>4</sup> 'Jahiliyya', an Islam term, means 'ignorance' in written language and refers to Arabia Period. In a word, it refers to all systems carried out with no relevance to Islam Law. Omar Ahmed, *Women in Jahiliyyah and Islam* (London: Deluxe Printers, 2001), 10.

Here we can find the origin of women circumcision. However, women circumcision is practiced in many Muslim countries in the name of Islam.<sup>6</sup> Besides, surprisingly a report says female circumcision is currently being practiced in Asian countries - the Philippines, Malaysia, Pakistan, and Indonesia, South American countries - Brazil, Eastern Mexico, and Peru, and in the West - France, Netherland, Sweden, U.S.A, Australia, and Canada in the shades to get around laws.<sup>7</sup> Which means that female circumcision did not naturally begin in South America, Asia, and the West, but it spread out to the world as Muslims who had been practicing female circumcision moved.

The purpose of female circumcision is wrapped as a coming of age ceremony externally, but internally, it serves to prevent women from having sexual desires and affairs by removing their sexually sensitive parts from genital organs and making them feel no sexual pleasures for entire life. It surely is an effective way to prevent four wives from having jealousy or envy against each other by suppressing their sexual desires in the society where polygamy is universal.<sup>8</sup> It is a precaution for wives not to have any sexual desires in order to fulfill the condition of polygamy, giving equal treatments to all four wives.

Due to women's rights issues resulted from women circumcision, many international organizations have strived hard for woman's rights protection. WHO(World Health Organization) once announced that female circumcision increases fatality at birth significantly as well as giving birth of dead newborns.<sup>9</sup> As a result, in Egypt, the supreme court confirmed the prohibition of female circumcision, and according to the prohibition law enacted on Dec. 28, 1997, female circumcision is officially forbidden in Egypt.<sup>10</sup> However, in most of African region, female circumcision is still being practiced as a religious ceremony in the sense of purifying woman. In Egypt, although female circumcision is officially against the law, there are people against the prohibition of female circumcision which had been practiced as a religious purification ceremony, so it is obvious that unofficially, it is still being practiced in the shades.

Characteristics of such surgical procedures include no anesthetics usage during surgery using unsanitary surgical tools such as razors, scissors, kitchen knives, and broken pieces of glasses by

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<sup>5</sup> Haifaa A. Jawad, 55.

<sup>6</sup> Juliette Mincses, *The House of Obedience: Women in Arab Society*, trans. Michael Pallis (U.K., London: Zed Press, 1982), 53.

<sup>7</sup> Olayinka Koso-Thomas, *The Circumcision of Women: A Strategy for Eradication*, Zed Books, London, 1987, 17, quoted in Haifaa. A. Jawad, 55.

<sup>8</sup> [http://www.songdojeil.or.kr/da\\_mission/view20010227.htm](http://www.songdojeil.or.kr/da_mission/view20010227.htm), August 14, 2002.

<sup>9</sup> *Foundation for Women's Health, Research and Development*, (FORWARD), the Information Office, London, April 1994. quoted in Haifaa A. Jawad, 52.

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.amnesty.or.kr/journal/ai3-4/world.htm>, August 14, 2002.

local aged women not by professional doctors. Thus, women receiving such surgeries bear much pain throughout their life: physically dysuresia and lumbago and in some worse cases, child delivery problems can occur. Also, there is a high chance of being infected by viruses and pathogenic bacteria, and it is reported that there are many girls died from losing an excessive amount of blood. It is needless to say how much psychological pain they go through during surgery, and often times they are severely hurt by the fact that their mothers and grandmothers gave them such pains and end up going through emotional problems.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, female circumcision is receiving attentions for causing an increase in AIDS patients for AIDS spread which is being seriously on the rise in the world.<sup>12</sup> Especially, the fact that AIDS is on the rise in the African region, a direct cause for the spread of AIDS can be found from indiscreetly and continuously performed surgeries on many people with unsanitary surgical tools.

Muslims emphasize that the social status of Arab women has increased significantly compared to the Arab women in 'Jahiliyya' era since the introduction of Islam. As for explanation of Islam polygamy on Quran 4:3, Young-Kil Choi also explains that the number of wife is limited to four compared to 'Jahiliyya' era where the number of wife per one man was unlimited.<sup>13</sup> It means that Muhammad limited the number of wives per one man to protect women by the Islamic law. Considering such inhumane treatment they were receiving in the 6th century, the Quran verses on women were teachings with the intention of protecting and respecting women from the situation and it needs to be recognized.<sup>14</sup> Verses on woman in Quran reflect inferior circumstances the Arab women were facing at the time of Quran "revelation"<sup>15</sup>, and it seems that Muhammad himself was influenced by his wives on his view of womanhood.<sup>16</sup> However, it seems that the limitation of womanhood in Quran and inhumane womanhood that the Islamic law shows based on the limitation are unsuitable for us, the modern people to comprehend the Islamic way of 'protecting women'. Thus, it is fair to interpret that the Quran's teachings on womanhood and marriage were a temporary measure of Arab culture in its

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<sup>11</sup> <http://www.cnnonsul.com/bbs/list.html?table=sisa>, August 14, 2002.

<sup>12</sup> S. R. Erlander, *The Cause of AIDS*, quoted in Haifaa A. Jawad, 56.

<sup>13</sup> Young-Kil Choi, *The Korean Translation of the Meanings of Holy Quran*, (King Fahd Complex for the Printing of the Holy Qur'an, 1999), 131, footnote 3-2). Quran cited in this text is *Korean Translation of the Meanings of Holy Quran*, (King Fahd Complex for the Printing of the Holy Qur'an, 1999), 131, footnote 3-2). On the first page of this Korean translation, the preface is written by Abdullah Bin Abdul Muhsin Al-Turki, the Secretary General of the Muslim World League, the Minister of Islamic Affairs and Endowments, advocacy and guidance in Saudi Arabia earlier. He wrote on the preface, "King Fahd Complex for the Printing of the Holy Qur'an located in Medina is presenting Korean readers the Korean translation by Dr. Young-Kil Choi." Therefore, *Translation of the Meanings of Holy Quran* is clearly translated by Professor Young-Kil Choi of Myongji University.

<sup>14</sup> Jaeok Jeon, "Muslim Woman: Yesterday and Today," *The Muslim Woman*, (Seoul: Yeyoung Communication, 1997), 46-47.

<sup>15</sup> I describe Islam's Quran "revelation" in the level it has no relevance to Christianity.

<sup>16</sup> Yongseon Kim, "The Status of Muslim Woman," *Local Research* Vol. 1 (1994, Spring): 73.

endless war time.

In this global era, a good number of Muslim women are coming to South Korea for education. According to the article "Glimpses of Islam, the veils uncovered." by Hankook Ilbo on the web written on Aug. 12, 2009, Korea Muslim Federation reported that the estimated number of Muslims who have migrated to South Korea is between 100,000 and 200,000, and Korean Muslims are 35,000. Along with this, the number of Muslim students coming to South Korea for education is rapidly increasing. According to a statistic from Korea Immigration Service, the number of Muslim students in South Korea has increased from 1,214 in 2005 to 2,802 in May, 2009, a 232% increase excluding Korean training students and general short time students. According to a 2008 statistics, the number of Muslim students came across South Korea from Uzbekistan, Bangladesh, Malaysia, Pakistan, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Turkey, Iran, Kyrgyzstan, Egypt, and Sudan were 2,124, and the number of legal aliens was 2,034 and the illegal aliens were 90 with a 4.5% illegal alien rate compared to alien workers, so they are living their Muslim life in the leading Korean university campuses legally.

Thus, when the positions of various circles treating Muslims who have just began to root deeply in the Korean society are different. The Christian position must be organized to understand Muslims visiting Korea as well as their religion as we are facing the global era; the Korean Christianity has a tremendous responsibility of spreading the gospel of God to Muslims visiting Korea. Therefore, I propose a consideration of Quran view of womanhood and marriage to understand Muslim women more objectively and to spread the gospel to them.

## II. Islamic View of Womanhood

### 1. Women in the Society

The Quran view of womanhood is closely related to Quran marriage. According to Quran, objectively, women have rights no different than men both biologically and socially<sup>17</sup>, but on the other hand, Sura al-Nisa' 4:34<sup>18</sup> puts women under men. It means that Allah is saying women are inferior to men in Quran. Sura al-Nisa' 4:34 supports such assertion.

"Men are in charge of women, as Allah has made one of them superior to the other, and because men spend their wealth for the women; so virtuous women are the reverent ones, guarding their husbands the way

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<sup>17</sup> Sura 3:195; 33:35; 67:12. are representative verses in Quran insisting on equal rights between man and woman.

<sup>18</sup> 'Qawwamuna', an Arab word meaning guardian, means a person who is devoted to others' business, honest, protective of the lord's profits, and looks after the lord's business here, and it means that man as a guardian of woman or the employee needs to properly protect the employer. (Sura al-Nisa' 4:34 footnote 34-1)

Allah has decreed guarding; and the women from whom you fear disobedience, (*at first*) advise and (*then*) do not cohabit with them, and (*lastly*) beat them; then if they obey you, do not seek to do injustice to them; indeed Allah is Supreme, Great." (Sura al-Nisa' 4:34)

Moreover, Al-Tabari, who is widely accepted in Islam, commented<sup>19</sup> this verse that God wants men to force their women to obey God and men by punishing and suppressing them.<sup>20</sup> Hence men who are defined as women's guardian is not equal to women but interpreted as women's sovereign. Sura al-Nisa' 4:34 speaks for the fundamental position of Islam on women. Muhammad Abduh (1905-1949) establishes men's superiority in two sides based on this verse: first, men's properties are more perfect, beautiful, and powerful and second, such properties bring men's productive power.<sup>21</sup> Many Islam scholars consider women as a inferior being compared to men, and representatively, Al-Aqqad says that women even if they are well known in science fields, are irrelevant to knowledge or scientific thoughts and cannot achieve any results, but they only exist to support men under their leads, and he sees women as necessary evil beings.<sup>22</sup>

In Sura al-Nisa' 4:1, the purpose of creating woman is found that God gave a spouse to a husband so that both can flourish abundantly, and woman can fulfill the purpose of life by bearing offspring as a sexual tool.<sup>23</sup> In Islam, since the prosperity of offspring is considered as the greatest blessing, woman's role is granted so that woman can be respected in this part. Thus possession of many wives is nothing to be ashamed of since it means having more offspring. I met an old man who runs a big lodging business near Mountain Sinai in Egypt, he was very proud to say he has a fourth wife.

In Quran, woman is the principal agent of temptation and adultery. As written in Sura 24:31 and 33:59, women are especially warned not to lure men, to wear a veil (hijab), and not to make any footstep sounds as a practical measure. Lowering eyes in verse 31 means not to look around the subject and reveal no weakness. Not to show any alluring parts means not to reveal neck, breasts, arms, legs and hairs those that are believed to give men sexual stimulation.<sup>24</sup> In result, woman have

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<sup>19</sup> Al-Tabari refers to at-Tabari, Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Jarir, and a definite article 'Al' (the) is attached. Tabari was born in Northern Tabaristan region. (year 225-310/year 839-923) He left a great achievement by writing footnotes in the entire Quran, and he was the cynosure from the Islam society by writing the world history from the Creation to his time. Cyril Glasse, *The Concise Encyclopedia of Islam* (U.K., London: Stacey international, 1989), 384.

<sup>20</sup> Hamdun Dagher, *The Position of Women in Islam* (Villach, Austria: Light of Life, 1995), 11.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 12-13

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

<sup>23</sup> "O men, fear your Lord, who hath created you out of one man, and out of him created his wife, and from them two hath multiplied many men, and women: And fear God by whom ye beseech one another; and [respect] women [who have born you], for God is watching over you" (Sura al-Nisa' 4:1). The commentator added that sometimes men forget the roles of women who contribute to human society. Mothers bearing children, wives becoming mothers should be respected, so sexual life which dominates human's physical life and especially leads human's emotional life at a high level needs to be respected as well.

<sup>24</sup> "And tell the believing women to subdue their eyes, and maintain their chastity. They shall not reveal any parts of their bodies,

been isolated from the Islamic society for keeping such rules and regulations. There are slight differences in degrees from regions, but such isolation system has set a great wall to break for women to enter the Islamic society, and this system has caused a high illiteracy rate for women. Such rules and regulations were created to improve the customs of disdaining woman in 'Jahiliyya' Era before the introduction of Islam and to protect women, but however, it ended up as a violation of human rights against women. Considering the most of Arab countries are deserts or the tropics, it is painful to force women to wear hijabs to cover their heads and bodies with long clothes instead of short ones. Although it is cooler to cover the body with long clothes to make shades instead of wearing short clothes exposing the skin to the sun in a desert climate, but covering both the head and body thoroughly is clearly a wrong custom originated from sexual discrimination.

Also, in Sura 3:14, women are defined as a joy of this life for men.<sup>25</sup> This view of womanhood continues in the afterlife that Allah grants a beautiful spouse to those who do good deeds as written in Sura 44:54, 52:20, and 55:56. Here we can clearly see that Quran does not treat woman respectfully, but it has turned women as a tool of joy for men. .

In Islamic law based on Quran, it is evident that woman is being treated only a half of man. When pressing adultery charges, man requires two witnesses whereas woman requires four<sup>26</sup>, and when accused of adultery charge, woman is confined to home when man is not. It is because woman cannot commit adultery when confined at home, but man does not stay home and goes out to look for food to feed his family instinctively when confined.<sup>27</sup>

In cases of inheritance, generally a male heritor is inherited twice much than a female heritress.<sup>28</sup> It is because man has a duty to take care of family when woman does not. It means man needs to support many wives and family in polygamy system. Moreover, in material cases, if there is not a male witness present then two female witnesses have the equal effect of one male witness, and that's because woman is not as familiar as man in finance, so woman is prone to make mistakes. When two

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except that which is necessary. They shall cover their chests, and shall not relax this code in the presence of other than their husbands, their fathers, the fathers of their husbands, their sons, the sons of their husbands, their brothers, the sons of their brothers, the sons of their sisters, other women, the male servants or employees whose sexual drive has been nullified, or the children who have not reached puberty. They shall not strike their feet when they walk in order to shake and reveal certain details of their bodies. All of you shall repent to GOD, O you believers, that you may succeed" (Quran 24:31).

<sup>25</sup> "Adorned for the people are the worldly pleasures, such as the women, having children, piles upon piles of gold and silver, trained horses, livestock, and crops. These are the materials of this world. A far better abode is reserved at GOD" (Sura 3:14).

<sup>26</sup> Jeongwui Kim. *An Introduction to Islam* (Seoul: Publishing Department, Hankuk University of Foreign Studies, 1993), 224-231.

<sup>27</sup> Footnote 16-1 on Quran 4:16

<sup>28</sup> Footnote 11-4 ④ on Quran 4:11

female witnesses testify, one of the two plays a supporting role not because woman's intellectual capability is inferior to of man's but to prevent mistakes from lack of experiences.<sup>29</sup>

Professor Choi (Myongji University) has commented on Sura 2:223 that woman is the land on which man should plant seeds in his book. He also explains that Quran on Suran 2:187<sup>30</sup> expresses man as woman's clothes and vice versa, and Quran emphasizes that man protects woman and children with labor and woman protects man with purity and as clothes protect and cover people.<sup>31</sup><sup>31</sup>

Thus, Quran is saying that woman is a subject to be protected on several verses. Before marriage, father has a duty to protect woman, and after marriage, man takes the baton. Most of women in the Mid-East cannot travel other countries without a written approval from a male guardian (a single woman from her father and a married woman from her husband), and more to that, woman is to use her father's or husband's identification to withdraw money from bank.<sup>32</sup> Thus such idea of protection must be interpreted differently from our concept of woman protection. Because, as already mentioned above, Quran verses (Sura 24:31 and 33:59) designate woman as the subject of sexuality and the provider of allurements and adultery and revoke woman's rights to prevent such sexual problems.

In *Islam* written by Professor Heesoo Lee of Hanyang University and Professor Wonsam Lee of Sunmoon University, et al., hijabs which women were forced to wear had been used to protect their virginity and the honor of family.<sup>33</sup> Why has virginity only been emphasized on woman? We need to take a look at the Islamic traditional wedding ceremony. Although Morocco is considerably westernized and riding the wave of openness, Fes region in Morocco still pertains strong Islamic traditions and exercises traditional way of wedding ceremony.<sup>34</sup> The wedding ceremony lasts for 3 nights and 4 days. On the first night after the ceremony, the groom checks the purity of the bride and the next morning, he shows her white Sirwal(underpants) stained with blood mark to the bride's mother.

Furthermore, in some Islam regions, female circumcision is practiced to suppress women's sexual functions and impulses, so they are receiving heavy criticism from international human's rights organizations. Female circumcision is mentioned nowhere in Quran<sup>35</sup>, but it is publically practiced in

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<sup>29</sup> Asghar Ali Engineer, *The Rights of Women in Islam* (London: C. Hurst & Company, 1992), 63-64.

<sup>30</sup> " They are clothing for you and you are clothing for them." (Sura 2:187).

<sup>31</sup> Young-Kil Choi, *Islam Cultures* (Seoul: Alim Publishing Group, 2000), 202-204.

<sup>32</sup> Dongmoon Kim, *Two Faces of Islam* (Seoul: Yeyoung Communicaton, 2001), 209.

<sup>33</sup> Heesoo Lee., et al., *The Islam* (Seoul: Cheonga Publishing Company, 2002), 110.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 158.

<sup>35</sup> Although Quran does not mention about female circumcision but there are verses in several Hadiths promoting female

the name of women protection.

On the other hand, the wind of changes is blowing to Islamic societies accordingly with dramatically changing social trends. Compared to the past, more women are advancing to the society, and not only suffrage but political activity, right to demand separation, right to own driver's license are granted to women as well as 'identification card'.<sup>36</sup> All these phenomena made possible when women were given the right to own private properties. Although women by Islamic law cannot carry out social activities as pleased, it is reported that women have been accumulating much wealth like 'Mahr.' In case of Saudi Arabia, women possess about 70%(11.5 billion dollars) of all savings in the entire banks in the nation, but women are passive on businesses or investments compared to men considering their accumulated wealth, and they let the banks handle the money.<sup>37</sup> Woman were not able to exert any governmental authority under the previous social structure considering the amount of wealth women possess because there were not any banks or investments in a tribal society. However, a new dimension called governmental economy was formed as a result of changes in the social structure, and each household's economy became a footstep to the national economy and the money hidden in the closet finally revealed its real power. In the nation, many of women's freedom are being revoked, but yet, operation of individual business is being permitted.

However, the preference for male offspring is still unchanging. Sometimes, a woman is filed for divorce for not bearing a son.<sup>38</sup> Such phenomenon is best demonstrated on the fact that polygamy is most commonly applied when the first wife does not bear a son and an Arab saying, 'boy means happiness'.<sup>39</sup> As for delivery, if a pregnant woman gives a birth to a girl, then she must get ready to go back to housework immediately, but when she bears a boy, then she can have her postnatal care on bed for at least 3 to 6 days and can rest for a total of 40 days.<sup>40</sup>

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circumcision. The verses are as follows. "Cut out a little but do not remove it completely since it is pleasant for woman and is good for man as well. "Circumcision is 'Sunnah' (normative custom -<http://www.islaminkorea.org/frame1.htm>, 2002. 8.14, Sunnah is defined as relationship, normative custom, transmission (Apostolic).) for man and is 'Makrumah' (honorable deed)", "Do not expand it but cut off a little, because it pleases man more.", "Female circumcision is only an honorable deed. There is no other meaning." (Sami Aldeeb Abu-Sahlieh, *To Mutilate in the Name of Jehovah or Allah, Legitimation of Male and Female Circumcision*, Unpublished Research, Institute of Canon Law, University of Human Sciences, Strasbourg, France, 1994, 9, quoted in Haifaa A. Jawad, 58.) However, Haifaa A. Jawad consider the Hadiths with such verses have contradictory points and are not trustworthy and they lack authority and legitimacy. (Haifaa A. Jawad, 58.) However, female circumcision which has been glorified as a rite of passage of purifying female and has continued to suppress woman's sexual desires in order to maintain polygamy has been evidently prosperous supported by the Hadiths verses. Thus, the damages need to be recognized before discussing the legitimacy of the problematic Hadiths.

<sup>36</sup> Dongmoon Kim, 213

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 207.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 210.

<sup>39</sup> Heesoo Lee., et al., 149.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 152.

## 2. Women at Home

Sura 4:34 is a famous verse of representing Quran view of manhood and womanhood. Man is woman's guardian and can take the initiative on virtually all matters. Qawwamuna, meaning a guardian here, means that man needs to protect woman as her guardian or employer.<sup>41</sup>

Haifaa A. Jawad<sup>42</sup> refers to Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI)<sup>43</sup> held in South Africa. He proves that in MUI, Sharia, the supreme law of Islam had recorded that the husband has the supreme authority to supervise his wife, and he further insists that a wife is created for the peace of her husband. However, Haifaa A. Jawad says this trend is contrary to Quran's teaching. He insists that Quran is misinterpreted into a relationship of an authoritative ruler, a dictator, and a servant fell down to an inferior creation instead of a desirable relationship between a husband and a wife - a relationship of equal companion. He adds that woman was falsely recognized as a creation for man's peaceful rest.<sup>44</sup> However, the verses in Quran that he is referring to explain the husband and wife have an equal companionship in marriage are not recorded.

Haifaa A. Jawad presents an argument based on Sura 2:228 and 4:34<sup>45</sup>. He insists that God has created man superior to woman, because man manages his life with economic power. Jawad raises an idea of the headship of husband in Sura 2:228 that man is superior to woman. This idea is certainly considered to be credited from the headship of husband and Jesus being the head of church in the Christian Bible. However, Jawad's concept of headship is different from the headship of husband in the Bible. The headship in the Bible is originated from Christ being the head of the church and his relationship with the church, and it means the love of Christ who sacrificed his whole body on the cross for the church and the church is the bride who is receiving his love.<sup>46</sup> On the contrary, Quran is providing a basis for man to punish woman. In Sura 4:34, Quran is surely saying that woman who does not take man's advices is allowed to use physical force upon. Quran says both man and

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<sup>41</sup> The annotation on Quran 4:34 1)

<sup>42</sup> He is teaching the Middle East and Islam at Westhill College, Birmingham.

<sup>43</sup> Haifaa A. Jawad, *The right of Women in Islam: An Authentic Approach* (London: Macmillan Press LTD, 1998), 38. Ulama means people with erudition on Islam, and 'Ulama' plays the role of mentally holding up the Islam society by interpreting and applying Shariah to the religion, politics, and the everyday life of Muslims. Thus, the Council of Ulama can be comprehended as an association of Islam scholars. <http://www.islaminkorea.org/frame1.htm>. August 14, 2002.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 38-39.

<sup>45</sup> "The divorced women shall wait three menstruations (*before marrying another man*). It is not lawful for them to conceal what GOD creates in their wombs, if they believe in GOD and the Last Day. (*In case of pregnancy*), the husband's wishes shall supersede the wife's wishes, if he wants to remarry her. The women have rights, as well as obligations, equitably. Thus, the man's wishes prevail (*in case of pregnancy*). GOD is Almighty, Most Wise." Sura 4:34 is omitted as the content was written before.

<sup>46</sup> "Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her" (Ephesians 5:22-25).

woman are humanly equal before God, but however, woman being completely under man's rule for the order of family, and furthermore, the society is what Quran's headship is about.

Woman is described as a farmland to be cultivated in the relationship with man in Sura 2:223.<sup>47</sup> This very verse implies that woman is not equal to man in marriage but a part of properties.

Fazlur Rahman as a former Islam professor of the University of Chicago and a spokesperson of reformism, modernism, and adaptationism played the role of spreading Islam religion to the western world and insisted that the man's superiority over woman in Sura 4:34 is not a problem on human nature but the superiority of man's role. In other word, he emphasized a functional superiority.<sup>48</sup> The problem of superiority between man and woman is a problem that occurs in the relationship between husband and wife, and In Quran, woman is granted a true value of living when she gets married. However, woman can never be equal to man in a marriage relationship.

Regardless of woman's will, sexual intercourse is valid when man wants it at his will, and man has the custody over newborns. Woman only has a duty as mother to nurture the baby for two years from birth.<sup>49</sup> Although there is not a single verse in Quran supporting female circumcision, approximately 1.1 hundred million women in African Middle East are suffering from female circumcision system under the name of protecting their purity.<sup>50</sup> Female circumcision system prevents women's jealousy from polygamy by decreasing their sexual desires, and it guarantees men's complete leadership in sexual relationship.

Different from universal understanding, the concept of an orphan shown in Sura 4:3 is a child without a father, so even if the child's mother is alive, the child stills falls into the orphan category.<sup>51</sup> It can be seen as an obvious interpretation in the Islamic society where the mother does not have custody over her children. However, after marriage, woman can own personal property, and 'Mahr' granted at marriage cannot be refunded at divorce<sup>52</sup>, so it is difficult to understand a child is treated as an orphan just because the father is not present when the mother has a property right. Judging from such facts, in marriage, woman is regulated by the Islamic law not to fulfill roles equal to man in the

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<sup>47</sup> "Your women are the bearers of your seed. Thus, you may enjoy this privilege however you like, so long as you maintain righteousness. You shall observe GOD, and know that you will meet Him. Give good news to the believers." (Sura 2:223).

<sup>48</sup> Jaeok Jeon, "Muslim Woman: Yesterday and Today," 34.

<sup>49</sup> Quran 2:233.

<sup>50</sup> Ann Louis Bardach, "In the Name of Islam - Woman are Abused, even Mutilated." *Reader's Digest* April 1994, 159.

<sup>51</sup> In an Islam dictionary, the meaning of "yatama" (orphan, to be an orphan) is defined as losing parents. It is not clear whether a child loses only one parent (father), the child would fall into orphan category. However, Quran puts children who lost their fathers and are living with mothers into orphanage category.

<sup>52</sup> Quran Sura 4:20.

society even if woman has a property right, and it is obvious that woman is not treated as a true human being. Woman only gets credit for a means to reproduce the humankind.

The basis for such phenomenon can be found in Quran, "Adorned for the people are the worldly pleasures, such as the women, having children, piles upon piles of gold and silver, trained horses, livestock, and crops. These are the materials of this world. A far better abode is reserved at GOD" (Sura 3:14).<sup>53</sup> Quran includes woman into a category of this life's ornaments which bring pleasures. Woman does not have a right to be in the heaven and her afterlife is unclear. The spouses in Sura 3:15 and 2:25<sup>54</sup> refer to wives ('Al-Hur Al-Ayn ') and nowhere in Quran mentions faithful Muslim women will meet beautiful husbands in afterlife. 'Pure spouses - Azwajun Mutahharatun' means pure wives more certainly In English Quran, and in plural not singular it means wives.<sup>55</sup> In addition, the commentator says to refer to Sura 29:64 in the footnote. In Korean version, it is translated, "This worldly life is no more than vanity and play, while the abode of the Hereafter is the real life, if they only knew," and there is no significant explanation, but however, in English explanation, it is written that all of them will possess two wives in the afterlife.<sup>56</sup> Thus, it is not wrong to say the reason polygamy is in practice in the Islam society is because of this view of afterlife. It represents how the concept of one husband to many, not one to one relationship belittles woman's personality.

Women are fulfilling their duty only when they give birth to a child after marriage. It is on the footnote explanation that it is fine to have a second wife when the first is unable to give birth. And this is the condition where polygamy is validated.<sup>57</sup> For both man and woman, marriage is not just a

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<sup>53</sup> In addition, the commentator insists that woman is what lures and decorates man the most, and the next is offspring that makes people's mind more reliable, and the last is gold, silver, treasures, and riches. Also, he further commented that all these things are not only an accessory in the present life but a momentary enjoyment.

<sup>54</sup> Say, "Let me inform you of a much better deal: for those who lead a righteous life, reserved at their Lord, are gardens with flowing streams, and pure spouses, and joy in GOD's blessings." GOD is Seer of His worshipers. Give good news to those who believe and lead a righteous life that they will have gardens with flowing streams. When provided with a provision of fruits therein, they will say, "This is what was provided for us previously." Thus, they are given allegorical descriptions. They will have pure spouses therein, and they abide therein forever. Here the commentator reveals that the pure companion is the wife in heaven – 'Al-Hur Al-Ayn' with a snow white skin and big eyes, and tremendously beautiful and pure.

<sup>55</sup> The Noble Quran - In The English Language, Muhammad Taqi-ud-Din Al-Hilali. Muhammad Muhsin Khan (Madinah Munawwarah, K.S.A.: King Fahd Complex), Sura 2:25.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., "And this life of the world is only an amusement and a play! Verily, the home of the Hereafter-that is the life indeed (i.e. the eternal life that will never end), if they but knew. (Sura 29:64.)-Narrated Abu Hurairah: Allah's Messenger said, "The first group (of people) who will enter Paradise will be (glittering) like the moon on a full-moon night. They will neither spit therein, nor blow their noses therein nor relieve nature. Their utensils therein will be of gold and their combs of gold and silver; in their censers the aloe wood will be used, and their sweat will smell like musk.

Every one of them will have two wives; the marrow of the bones of the wives' legs will be seen through the flesh out of excessive beauty. They (the people of Paradise) will neither have difference, nor enmity (hatred) amongst themselves; their hearts will be as if one heart, and they will be glorifying Allah in the morning and in the afternoon."(Sahih Al-Bukhari, Vol. 4, Hadith No. 468).

<sup>57</sup> Haifaa A. Jawad, 47-48. And according to the footnote on Sura 4:3, there are circumstances and conditions for having four wives, and the first condition is when the wife is infertile and cannot give birth to a child. By the human instinct, not only the man

simple contract. For them, it is considered a religious act and a spiritual life. For woman, more religious dedication is demanded from marriage life, and they are pregnancy, childbirth, and nurture. It is because when woman gets married and only delivers and nurtures children, the children are destined to become Muslim in the future.<sup>58</sup> Here we can see how their marriage policy is closely related to the quantitative growth of Islam. Woman receives credit as a tool for expanding Islam congregation. Aliah Schleifer discusses, citing from Quran and Hadith and writes that when a woman dies while giving birth then she is like a martyr dying in battle.<sup>59</sup> Moreover, he has written in the conclusion that 99% of woman is destined to go to hell like the saying, "Hell is created for woman."<sup>60</sup> but if a woman gets pregnant, gives birth, and nurtures a baby, she will exceptionally go to heaven.<sup>61</sup> Therefore, woman receives the best treatment in family as a mother.

### III. Islam Marriage

It is not wrong to say what has given the greatest effect on the remarkable spread of Islam is the natural increase of Muslim population. Quran says, "If you deem it best for the orphans, you may marry their mothers - you may marry two, three, or four. If you fear lest you become unfair, then you shall be content with only one, or with what you already have. Additionally, you are thus more likely to avoid financial hardship" in Sura 4:3. Thus, Quran basically accepts polygamy. Under the name of protecting woman, it is legally accepted to have four wives in some cases. Aside from legally specified four wives, relationship with maids who are stated as the 'possession of the right hand' has resulted in a exponential growth in the Islam society where there is no limits to subordinates, and their children who become Muslims from birth have laid a foundation for a quantitative growth of Islam.

Thus, Christian families with only one or two children cannot keep up with the natural growth rate of Islam since Muslims follows polygamy.<sup>62</sup> On the 10th page of Chosun Ilbo on Nov. 12, 2000, it is reported that the number of people who believe in Quran will reach one third of the world's population by 2025. Therefore, we need to develop concrete mission plans and confront the natural growth and

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wants a little baby but the infertile wife too. In this case, the man can have another woman as his wife and take care of her rather than getting divorced with his first wife.

<sup>58</sup> Aliah Schleifer, *Motherhood In Islam* (U.K., Cambridge: The Islamic Academy, 1986), 51.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 54.

<sup>60</sup> Hamdun Dagher, 17.

<sup>61</sup> Aliah Schleifer, 58.

<sup>62</sup> According to Chosun Ilbo on October 10, 2002, the population of Jews was decreased between 1999 and 2000, but Muslim population is constantly increasing. So Mohammad Nimer, the director of CAIR said, "It is true that Jewish Americans have a greater influence than Muslim Americans currently, but in the future, the situation can change due to population". Steven Hoffman reported that the leading cause for the decreasing population of Jewish Americans is that the number of women in thirties without children is twice as much then the U.S. national rate of 27%.

development of Muslim to achieve Jesus' commands for us.

Such Islam marriage system shows Islam women's social status. In Islam society, their policy is represented in distinction not discrimination of man and woman. However, since polygamy is permitted, it is easy to find out how Muslims look down on woman compared to man in Quran and several Mid East customs in objective and common-sense positions. In case of Turkey, by law only one wife is permitted for the husband, but I learned the general life of Turkish women through a woman who was physically abused and received weekly living expense from the husband since marriage with an interview with the Korean woman living as a Turkish woman in Turkey for the past 25 years.<sup>63</sup> However, the coverage that 'Islam protects woman and distinguishes not discriminates woman' was broadcasted publically through the media with the program – MBC's 4 parts special series 'Islam' - 2nd part 'Muslim Woman'.<sup>64</sup> Muslims emphasized on "distinction not discrimination between man and woman" in the program, and it is indeed unfortunate that the glorification not the fact represented the Islamic view of womanhood as a former student in Turkey myself. And recently, considering the majority of foreign workers came to Korea for jobs, many problems occurring between Muslim men and Korean women cannot be ignored anymore. In fact, there are three Pakistan restaurants in Itaewon, and all these three restaurants are run by Pakistan men with Korean wives. Also, the Islam bookstore owner located on the corner of the Seoul Central Masjid proudly told me that his wife is Korean. In Wongok-dong, Ansan-si, a Pakistan restaurant is run by Pakistan man with Korean wife as well. In such circumstance, the public media broadcasted a glorified view of Muslim womanhood without filtering.<sup>65</sup> In the reality, writings about the view of Muslim womanhood are translated in Korean through Islamic bookstores and distributed for promotion purposes. Considering the reality that many Korean women have positive thoughts about international marriage due to changes in their values, an objective coverage and promotion on the view of Muslim womanhood and marriage are urgent.

On February 2, 2001, MBC broadcasted a program subtitled "The Choice of Foreigners" under MBC Special. The marriage between Muslims and Koreans was heavily covered while giving diverse actual cases of international marriage examples. Throughout the program, except for one family, most

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<sup>63</sup> The interview in Istanbul, Turkey, on February 19, 2009.

<sup>64</sup> The interview with the Professor Heesoo Lee of Hanyang University in the 2<sup>nd</sup> part 'Muslim Woman' of MBC's 4 parts special program, 'Islam' broadcasted on September 14, 2001.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid..

of families with Muslims were heading toward the end of marriage. One successful marriage case was a family with a Malaysian woman in Gagyong-dong, Cheongju-si, and the both husband and wife along with two boys were living as thorough Muslims.<sup>66</sup>

Judge Sanghoon Lee of the 5th Judge's Chamber in Seoul Family Court, decided a case in favor of the plaintiff on the divorce claim of a 38-years-old Korean woman against a 42-years-old Saudi Arabian husband. The divorce claim was filed because the defendant, the husband, made a promise not to practice polygamy, an Islamic custom, at their marriage in 1988, but he married a Syrian woman secretly, so the claim was filed, and the justice department disclosed, "Divorce claims are decided following the husband's country law, but bigamy falls into a serious cause for the plaintiff not to keep her marriage in Korea where monogamy is obeyed."<sup>67</sup>

#### 1. The Marital life of Muhammad

Syed Ahmad (1817-1897) who greatly influenced the modern trend of Islam, Ameer Ali (1849-1928), and Muhammad Iqbal (1873-1938) are the ones trying to adapt to modernization while reviving Islam.<sup>68</sup> Among them, Ameer Ali covered "Woman's position in Islam" in his book, *The Spirit of Islam*, which has been recognized as a classic in the Islam world. He developed a defense that Islamic marriage of polygamy and the life of women are accordingly and relative better than the western marriage.<sup>69</sup> Ameer Ali says that Muhammad did not legally enact polygamy, but he assesses that Khadijah who was Muhammad's turning point in life and her daughter Fatimah both influenced the development of his point of view at womanhood. Moreover, Ali interprets the phrase, 'marry of the women, who seem good to you, two or three or four; and if ye fear that ye cannot do justice' in Sura 4:3 that in fact, Muhammad is ordering monogamy. He thinks that the Arab word "adl" meaning fair not only means a fair distribution of the necessities of life but it also includes emotional distribution of love, affection, and respect. Since it is impossible to fairly distribute the emotion of love, so Muhammad's actual intent was monogamy.<sup>70</sup>

However, Muhammad himself had more than four wives; he had ten. They were Khadijah, Sawdah, Aishah, Hafsa, Umm Salamah, Umm Hababah, Zainab, Juwairiyah, Safiyah, Maimunah. Professor

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<sup>66</sup> MBC Special series "The Choice of Foreigners" broadcasted on February 2, 2001.

<sup>67</sup> <http://search.hankooki.com/search/searc.../h200101201827411451789.ht> October 30, 2002.

<sup>68</sup> Jaeok Jeon, "Muslim Woman: Yesterday and Today", 29.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 30.

Heesun Cho of Myeongji University has recorded Muhammad's twelve wives including two Zainabs, Zainab bin Khuzaimah and Zainab bint Jahsh among his wives, and Maria the Coptic woman who gave birth to Ibrahim for Muhammad. On the other hand, Hamdun Dagher in his book, *The Position of Women in Islam*, tells that Muhammad had thirteen wives including Rayhana.<sup>71</sup> Other than his favorite wife Aisha (the daughter of the first caliph Abou Bakr), the rests were either divorcees or widows, and he was blamed for taking Zainab bint Jahsh who was his daughter-in-law. Zainab bint Jahsh was a wife of his stepson; he justified the marriage by saying, "A stepson is different from a biological son." Sura 33:40 footnotes 40-1, 33:50)<sup>72</sup> Quran clearly commands not to marry wives of the sons. Thus, many people criticized Muhammad back then, but Muhammad explained that his ten wives are the subject in need for sacrificial cares.<sup>73</sup> However, there is a record about him flaunting his energy and having sexual intercourses with nine of his wives one at a time at one night with his special ability (*kafit*)<sup>74</sup> which is forty times stronger than ordinary men and it was granted from God.<sup>75</sup>

His wives are assessed as politically contributing to the expansion of Islam.<sup>76</sup> In case of Osama bin Laden, who is a Muslim fundamentalist and coordinated the United State's 9.11 terrorism, the wealth and leadership of his wives are laying a huge foundation to the expansion of Islam.

## 2. Polygamy

### 1) Quran's teaching of being justice to all wives

The reason that polygamy has not abolished but subsists in Islamic society is to find solutions for special conditions through marriage. Here, the word special conditions means, first, the number of male population dropped dramatically and female population went up relatively with frequent wars, so the four wives rule was allowed to look after women and children, secondly, when the first wife cannot have a child because of sterility, polygamy was permitted for husbands to marry a different woman to reproduce offspring; in this case, Muslims say that the more desirable is to leave the first wife as is than getting divorced with the first and bringing a new one. If the first wife gets divorced because of sterility, she will suffer from the burden of life, so polygamy can be justified. Thirdly, when the first wife

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<sup>71</sup> Hamdun Dagher, 130. Referring to the footnote in the book, scholars are yet to decide the actual number of Muhammad's wives. In al-Tabari, it was recorded that He had fifteen wives. (al-Tabari, 3:160ff.). Whether to include Maria the Coptic woman and Rayhana received Muhammad's love or not (al-Tabari, 3:129) is why the number is different.

<sup>72</sup> Dongjoo Lee, "Christian Language Inherent in Quran", *The Modern Religion*, May Edition 2002, 112.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 30.

<sup>74</sup> *Kafit* is an Arabian word meaning an ability to have sexual intercourses and to get married.

<sup>75</sup> Hamdun Dagher, 130.

<sup>76</sup> Dongjoo Lee, 30.

gets sick or cannot have sexual relationship with husband, the husband follows polygamy to enjoy sexual life.<sup>77</sup>

In Quran, the verse allowing polygamy can be found in Sura 4:3.

If you deem it best for the orphans, you may marry good women - you may marry two, three, or four. If you fear lest you become unfair, then you shall be content with only one, or with what your right hand already have. That is more suitable and protects you from injustice.<sup>78</sup>

Here many Islamic scholars are permitting polygamy but they have been actively debating the condition of being 'fair' or 'just'. What does it mean to deal justly? Whether it means a legally just distribution of wealth or it means emotional and sentimental justice as well. Each scholars have different interpretation and have two different aspects whether Quran permits polygamy or not.

Sura 4:129 is another verse in Quran to talk about the problem of justice.

You can never be equitable in dealing with more than one wife, no matter how hard you try. Therefore, do not be so biased as to leave one of them hanging to one side. If you reconcile and fear God, then forgiveness and mercifulness come from God.<sup>79</sup>

As Sura 4:129 is saying, no matter how hard we try, justice cannot be maintained. In English version of Quran, it uses the word 'never' to more strongly deny a perfect justice. Then, why would Muhammad mention polygamy and suggest such an impossible condition? And in this impossible condition, polygamy is permitted upon necessity, or polygamy is not permitted even in an inevitable circumstance since the justice between wives is impossible, there the problem of interpretation rises.

Sura 4:3 connotes the possibility and 4:129 does the strong impossibility in the matter of justice. This manner of Muhammad was melted in his life that he practiced polygamy, and the fact that he was permitting polygamy regardless of justice issues resulted in legally permitting polygamy. Thus, in Islam society, polygamy is decided by the capability of man.

Shaikh Muhammad Bin Sirin<sup>80</sup> in his explanation to Sura 4:129 mentioned that being impossible to be just to all wives does not mean a just distribution of wealth or in legal parts but it must be

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<sup>77</sup> The commentary on Korean Quran Sura 4:3 is describing similarly as above.

<sup>78</sup> English version of Quran states, "And if you fear that you shall not be able to deal justly with the orphan-girl then marry (other women of your choice, two or three, or four; but if you fear that you shall not be able to deal justly (with them), then only one or (the slaves) that your right hands possess. That is nearer to prevent you from doing injustice. (Sura 4:3)"

<sup>79</sup> English version of Quran states, "You will never be able to do perfect justice between wives even if it is your ardent desire, so do not incline too much to one of them (by giving her more of your time and provision) so as to leave the other hanging (i.e. neither divorced nor married). And if you do justice, and do all that is right and fear Allah by keeping away from all that is wrong, then Allah is Ever Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful."(Sura 4:129)

<sup>80</sup> 'Shaikh' means elder, and his name is Muhammad the son of Sirin.

interpreted that it is not possible in love and sexual intercourse.<sup>81</sup> However, Insup Lee from Hankuk University of Foreign Studies says that "to deal justly" should be interpreted as a legal and material justice in his explanation of Sura 4:3 and 4:129 and further adds, it means no emotional things.<sup>82</sup> Moreover, Tabari means it is impossible for a man to love two women equally and this feeling of love is defined as irrelevant to his will on Sura 4:129.<sup>83</sup> Shaikh Abu Bakr ibn al-`Arabi<sup>84</sup> says that nobody can control their minds but solely depend on God(Allah). If one man satisfies one wife more than others, then it is not his intention; neither it can be held against him nor he needs to take any responsibility.<sup>85</sup>

These interpretations demonstrate that the article "to deal justly," to which Quran attach a condition is not enough to be a barrier for not practicing polygamy in real marriage life. Taken the standard of treating wives legally and materially justly into consideration, whoever with money will attempt polygamy. And considering that both emotional and sentimental sides should be just, husband does not feel any responsibility in the values that the human emotion is not related to the husband's will and it cannot be controlled but is depend on God's hand.

Thus when financially affordable, polygamy can be practiced under the good name of caring woman in the welfare side. Islamic view of womanhood that protects woman is answering to the emotional inequality of woman in marriage relationship with "In Shaa Allah."<sup>86</sup> Woman's inner wound caused by polygamy is immense, but nobody cares about the wound. Only God(Allah) knows the seriousness as Shaikh Abu Bakr ibn al-`Arabi mentioned. In result, Quran without an thorough understanding of the inner side of marriage life is permitting polygamy institutionally.

Anyway, progressive Islam scholars are interpreting the problem of justice as follows. It does not simply mean an equal distribution of wealth by law but an emotional justice as well. The husband's time and attention must be shared equally, and the husband should not cause a jealousy among

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<sup>81</sup> 'Abdur Rahman I. Doi, *Women in Shari'ah (Islamic Law)*, 4th ed. (Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur: A. S. Noordeen, 1992), 54.

<sup>82</sup> Insup Lee, "Quran-Arabian Study," Asian Center for Theological Studies and Mission, February 12, 2001. An excerpt from his lecture at Seodaemun campus, Asian Center for Theological Studies and Mission. According to al-Tabari commentary, it is legally and materially just. "Scholars have different opinions about 'to deal justly', and that's because some believe it means to deal Mahr justly or and some do not." Ja:mi'al-Baya:n 'an Ta'wi:l al-Tabari:y, 'Ay al-Qur'a:n, the third book of fifteen books, (Beirut: Da:r al-Fikr, 1988), 231.

<sup>83</sup> Dawoud El Alami and Doreen Hinchcliffe, *Islamic Marriage and Divorce Laws of the Arab World* (UK, London: CIMEL, 1996), 17.

<sup>84</sup> 'Shaikh' means an elder and 'Abu Bakr' is his name.

<sup>85</sup> 'Abdur Rahman I. Doi, 54.

<sup>86</sup> Youngil Choi, in his book, *Islam Culture*, refers to "In Shaa Allah" as the hardest word to comprehend for foreigners in Islam countries. It is interpreted 'as God's will' but is also conventional an expression to avoid responsibilities or an expression meaning 'I don't know' after continuously repeating things which cannot be held responsible until there is no more excuse remaining.

wives by any actions. If a husband goes on a trip with two wives, then he should take both wives or leave both of them at home. But if only one wife is accompanied, then others should be accompanied in turns.<sup>87</sup>

Therefore, the progressive scholars believe that the Quran's will is to prohibit polygamy since being just in all dimensions is virtually impossible.<sup>88</sup> The Muhammad's intent is to mention the problem of justice to make people to accept polygamy as impossible. However, in many Islam countries, polygamy is legally permitted, and especially financially abundant men boast of and practice polygamy. Everything is resulted from polygamy that Muhammad showed through his life. Although Muhammad raises the issue of justice, there is a record that he had over ten wives.<sup>89</sup> Therefore, the issue of justice is not meant to persuade people that polygamy is not possible.

However, there are still Islam scholars who insist that polygamy is Quran's fundamental position on marriage. Haifaa A. Jawad and Asghar Ali Engineer are the representative scholars. Jawad's basis for polygamy is found in Sura 4:1 and 30:2.<sup>90</sup> The linguistic interpretation of 'one soul' (nafs in Arab) in Sura 4:1 is soul, self, person, will and etc., and here it means Adam the ancestor of mankind, so that it is commented as 'from Adam' or 'from a part of Adam, in other word, the ribs'.<sup>91</sup> Moreover, he believes that after Eve was created from Adam's rib, they were meant to be spouses for each other and reproduce humans in Sura 30:20.<sup>92</sup> In other word, Jawad is saying, when God created the heaven and earth in the beginning, He created a man(Adam) and a woman(Eve) and made them to be united with marriage and to form a family, the most basic unit of group. Therefore, a man and a woman are the beginning of family, and Quran surely is suggesting monogamy as an ideal form of marriage.<sup>93</sup> Thus it seems no particularly different from the Genesis in Christianity. However, what they admit is that Muhammad permitted polygamy because many men died by the time Uhud war was

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<sup>87</sup> Muhammad Abdul-Rauf, *The Islamic View of Women and The Family* (3rd. Ed; U.S.A., Alexandria: Al-Saadawi Publications, 1995), 106.

<sup>88</sup> Dawoud El Alami and Doreen Hinchcliffe, 16.

<sup>89</sup> Refers to the marriage life of Muhammad, in the Islamic viewpoint of marriage in the body III.

<sup>90</sup> "O people, observe your Lord; the One who created you from one being, and created from it its mate, then spread from the two many men and women. You shall regard GOD, by whom you swear, and regard the parents. GOD is watching over you." (Sura 4:1) "Among His proofs is that He created for you spouses from among yourselves, in order to have tranquility and contentment with each other, and He placed in your hearts love and care towards your spouses. In this, there are sufficient proofs for people who think." (Sura 30:21) - This verse is on Sura 30:20 for Both English version and Haifaa A. Jawad's version of Quran. The reason Qurans have differences in the number of total verses is because of "Alif. Lam. Mim" on the very first verse of Sura. A.L.M. is either the secret of God or the great name of God or the letter that only God knows or an omitted abbreviation. It is footnoted in Quran that some scholars think that 'Alif', 'Lam', and Mim are an abridged form of God, mercy, and glory, and some others interpret them an symbolic word describing a profound and mysterious truth. So there is one verse difference whether to consider A.L.M. one verse or not in Quran.

<sup>91</sup> The commentary on Sura 4:1 written on the first footnote of the Korean version of Quran.

<sup>92</sup> Footnote on Sura 30:20 from Korean version of Quran.

<sup>93</sup> Haifaa A. Jawad, 122. - Referring to footnote number 17

over. Not that polygamy was illegally practiced by people but it was permitted according to the revelation of Muhammad as seen in Sura 4:3.<sup>94</sup>

An Islam scholar named Abduh insists that polygamy must be legally prohibited because there are no special circumstance like war anymore, regardless of justice.<sup>95</sup> However, many Islam countries are legally allowing polygamy. The reason behind why allowing polygamy that there is a chance for any individual to face special cases, so polygamy cannot be prohibited externally.<sup>96</sup> But it is not absurd to say such special cases are resulted from male egotism. Except for cases when a wife is either sick or infertile, polygamy is legally accepted by Islam countries for such reasons when a husband think his wife possesses bad personality, when the first wife does not obey husband, and to satisfy his sexual desire, and etc.<sup>97</sup> In these sorts of situation, it would be difficult to expect husbands' justice for wives in Muslim families where polygamy is permitted.

#### IV. Conclusion

Modern people accept cultural diversity in this global era, and in Christian mission, cultural diversity cannot be overlooked. And there rises the problematic social system resulting from differences in values. To spread the gospel and to communicate with non-Christians, a prior knowledge of different cultures and values of different religions are necessary. Especially, I've composed this thesis to promote understanding to communicate with Muslim women through consideration on the Islamic view of womanhood and marriage. That's because starting with polygamy being institutionalized and practiced in the Muslim world, problems like female circumcision are becoming a topic in the international society. Seeking for ways to restore Muslim women's human rights, I have come to a conclusion that only love - the power of Christian gospel - can heal their wounds and can set them free from suppression and social fetters.

The fact that Muslim women's moans and cries of pains are revealed in statistics in Lebanon, one of open societies among Mideast countries according to a recent publication, "*A Study on the Phenomenon of Muslim Polygamy in Lebanon*"<sup>98</sup> included in a report journal of Korea Association of Middle East Studies makes me seek God's love for Muslim women. Apart from the special cases that

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<sup>94</sup> On the contrary, there is no single verse that permits polygamy in the Bible. Which means that there is not any revelation from God allowing polygamy whether to treat all wives justly or it is impossible.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., 45.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid., 46.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., 48-49.

<sup>98</sup> Ahn, Jeongkook, "*A Study on the Phenomenon of Muslim Polygamy in Lebanon*", Vol 2. of 27th book (2007): 37-63.

Young-Kil Choi is explaining on the footnote of Sura 4:3 for polygamy, many Lebanon families are suffering from plural marriages, not from wars and for the welfare of orphans and widows. According to a research from Jeongkook Ahn, the Muslim makes up 62% of the entire Lebanon population and 1.2% of Muslim men have more than two wives.<sup>99</sup> Also, the wealth of Muslim male individual is not being the criterion for second, third, or fourth wife.<sup>100</sup> Therefore, Muslim men are not getting more wives for their relief and social welfare. Moreover, the Muslim men's average age for first marriage is twenty-four, the second marriage is thirty-five, and the third marriage is forty-one. Along with this, the average age of first wife is eighteen, the second wife is twenty-five, and the third wife is twenty-nine, so when a Muslim man gets married for third time, he is meeting a wife who is at least ten years younger. In some cases, there was a twenty-three years difference.<sup>101</sup> As for Muslim men's reasons for getting second and third wives were: 72.3% voted 'because the Islam law permits', 26.7% voted 'just wanted to have two or more wives', and 'a strong sexual power', 'abundant financial powers', and 'marriage conflicts' followed.<sup>102</sup> Also, approximately 40% of Muslim men were not telling their first wife about their second marriage, and over half of them answered in the order of 'it is not a big deal', 'to avoid troubles', and 'not to hurt the feelings of the first wife and the children'.<sup>103</sup> On the other hand, the majority of first wives were against the idea, and some wives even had to be hospitalized for shocks.<sup>104</sup> Also, the majority of husbands with second wives spend most of their time with their second wives. They do support child and financial cares but do not go out with their first wives and only showed up to them few times throughout the whole year.<sup>105</sup>

Hence the idealism of polygamy as an Islam social relief measure can hardly be found in Lebanon polygamy system. On the contrary, there are cases where children have to drop out of school due to a financial problem caused by the father's second marriage.<sup>106</sup> Such phenomenon is a harmful consequence caused by an impersonal marriage system by male egotism. Also, it is a contradiction of the social system brought by impersonal Islamic view of womanhood which has ignored woman's rights.

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<sup>99</sup> Ibid., 45.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid., 51. Table 8.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., 47-48.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., 53-54. Table 11.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid., 55-56.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid., 56-57.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid., 58.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid., 60.

But still in the Islam society including Egypt and Malaysia, an educational book<sup>107</sup> which promotes polygamy and how women can live in this family system can be found. The fictitiousness of these data being reported to Korea on the Islamic view of womanhood can be realized through this booklet covering how they can manage jealousy and coexist with other wives and how they can be patient as well as the importance of patience as experiencing polygamy as a Muslim woman.

I feel strong obligation to let women know the Islamic view of womanhood and marriage correctly and objectively so that the women leading this global era unaware of heterogeneity of other cultures and of the differences in values do not start unhappy marriage life led by the impulse of emotion. Moreover, I hope that Korean churches understand Muslim women correctly and heal and free them with the love of Jesus Christ and to present the gospel as a gift.

Key words: Islam, Women, Polygamy, Quran, Women Circumcision, Women's rights  
Muslim Women, Polygamy, Muhammad

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<sup>107</sup> Umm Abdur Rahman Hirschfelder and Umm Yasmeen Rahmaan, From Monogamy to Polygyny: A Way Through (Riyadh: DARUSSALAM, 2003)

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